

## THE INFLUENCE OF ORIENTAL ART.

BY F. W. FITZPATRICK.

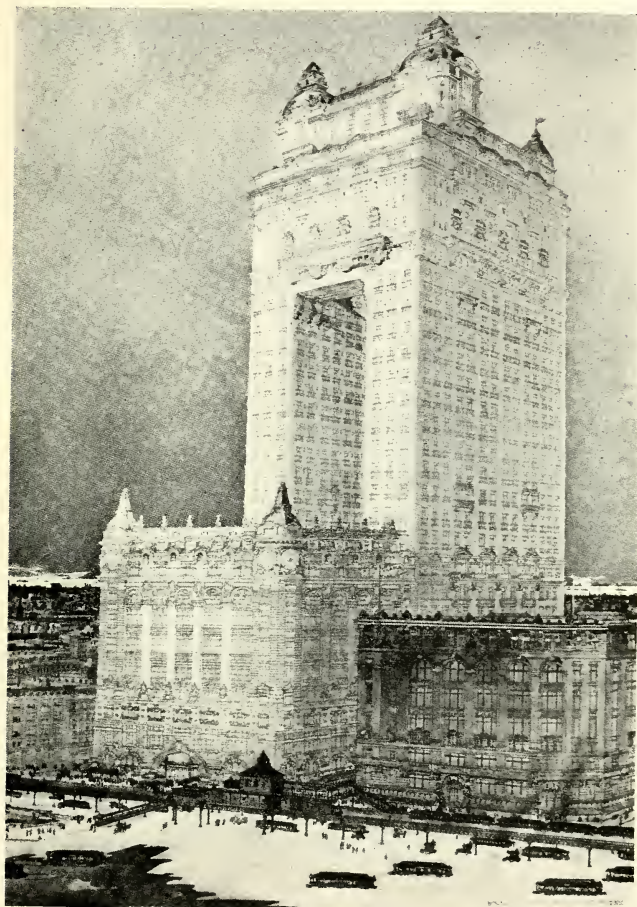
“....And out of the darkness of the East did ye fetch its arts, its adornments, and fitting these about ye and about your temples did ye become as of the East....and will ye hand down these things to all posterity....”

THE first impression made upon an artist who travels in the Orient is the immobility, the placidity, the unchangeableness, as it were, of its monuments, its aspects, its customs, its very peoples. There is a harmony one finds nowhere else. A civilization that seems as old as man; a land that has been invaded time and again, conquered, but that, unlike other conquered lands, always impressed its civilization, its laws, and its customs upon its invaders, instead of being changed, affected by them.

In the comprehensive term “civilization” is, of course, included art; or rather let us call one but the synonym of the other. And Oriental art has been a most potent influence upon that of all other lands, if, indeed, it may not be termed the *mother* of all art. In the ancient Orient all art centered about the greatest, most useful and finest of human achievements in artistic fields—architecture. All else, painting, sculpture, enameling, pottery, mosaics, textiles, all these agencies were impressed into the service of the great mistress, and their resultant works became—if they had not their origin as—embellishments, ornaments, mere accessories, to enhance her queenly splendor.

In Greece it was different. The conditions, climate, exceptional circumstances, permitted an influence to be made upon its arts that was felt nowhere else, and is not apt to make itself felt anywhere again. I refer to the inordinate love of gymnastics. These exercises that developed the human body to its highest perfection gave an impetus to the plastic and drawn representation of the human form that led to the apotheosizing of those two arts, their elevation

far above all the others, and, we may add, led to the corruption of good morals and the final debasement of the Greeks. Christianity



THE TERMINAL OF THE M'ADOO TUNNEL.

Rather Academic in detail, but its unconventional, unusual lines and minarets remind one of the Orient.

and Mohammedanism found it necessary to suppress this voluptuous depicting of the human form, but they could not eradicate the love of perfectly symmetrical and beautiful forms that that influence had created.

Now architecture is the art in which that sentiment finds its highest expression, its most subtle application. Therefore are we, as de Beaumont so aptly puts it, "the more impressed with the civilization that gave us the magnificent perspectives of Thebes, of Memphis, of Babylon and of Nineveh, ages before Milo's nameless sculptor thought of his Venus or Phidias of his bas-reliefs. In the former are not only the perfect harmony of the human form, but the sentiment, the evidences and complex significance of a complete and exalted civilization, a symbolism profounder and far more eloquent than the mere perfection of a representation of however beautiful a human body."

Architecture has attributes so essentially her own, a manner so essentially, we might say, personal, of expressing the beautiful, and has such peculiarly individual tendencies that it is impossible to look upon that art as a mere growth, an evolution, brought into play by the later necessities of man. We are prone to look upon it, and with perfect justice too, as a distinct function of our species, "an instinct *sui generis* that should be classified as one of the faculties of man—the faculty, or instinct, of construction." Many scientists seem to see in the monuments of antiquity but the successive modifications of a common plan, a primitive shelter for man; they think that the "instincts" of proportion, harmony and ornamentation were awakened in, if not given to, man very late in his development. Quatremère for instance, a high authority in archeology, by a very roundabout reasoning, thinks that the peaked-roof hut built upon posts was the original basis of Greek architecture, but that it played no part in that of the Egyptian and Asiatic peoples, the herders and hunters of animals, who lived in caverns or in tents. It has been proven beyond question that Grecian art, instead of being an outgrowth from the hut of their ancestors, such as he describes, was copied in every particular, as well as could be and with the materials at hand, from the Egyptians, who were past-masters in the science of construction ages before the Greeks needed even a hut. That they later modified that art, changed it, adapted it to their particular wants and advanced ideas is incontestable, but to attribute its invention to the Greeks is not a reasonable hypothesis.

If we observe the different ways in which the birds of different species build their nests, the labyrinthine and geometrically ad-

mirable, well-drained and well-ventilated borings of rodents, and the cellular constructions of insects, we will get ourselves in the



THE SINGER TOWER.

The Metropolitan tower, also of New York City, is the only building in the world which exceeds this in height, which is a composite architecturally but undoubtedly Oriental in flavor. Its minaretted form and enlarged top suggest the far East rather than the busy New World.

properly receptive mood to accept the theory that man is a *born* architect. Time has improved that faculty; education and necessity have rendered its work more complex, but we must admit that the instinct *is* inherent in us—an idea that scientists have combated most strenuously until very recent date.

That contention established, it is but a step to the certainty that some one people, favored by climate and other conditions, developed the inborn esthetic instinct to a very high degree, and became the fountain-head of that art, as it was also the source of the highest civilization. Few studies are as interesting, and few present so open and legible a book to study from. Perfectly preserved monuments, or debris of structures from which time has been unable to efface the records they establish, are at every step the student takes—in the right direction. In Egypt, in Arabia, in Assyria, in Phenicia, in Persia, one may trace the gradual growth, the flowering of that original and parent art from the sturdy and ancient trunk, that developed from the seed planted in the virgin soil of Elam eons ago, by primitive man; but man, nevertheless, endowed with the faculty that inspired the planting of the seed.

To follow out all the branches of that tree in their countless sproutings and twigs, to observe the graftings made from it to other and younger trees, grown originally from its slippings planted in strange soils and forced with strange fertilizers, would be interesting indeed, but space permits us no such pleasant rambles. We must hasten on to the influence of Oriental art upon our own era.

Some would have us think that our splendid art of the Middle Ages literally sprang into being, was invented and carried to perfection by some occult dispensation from the law of evolution, a miraculous intervention. On the contrary, it was brought all ready-made from the Orient. Like some exotic plant that, when taken from its native soil, droops and apparently withers, art had a period of decadence just before that time, but when transplanted into congenial soil and carefully nursed it bloomed and clothed itself with such fresh splendor that, seen in its new surroundings of more somber hue than those of its birth, it could hardly be recognized as the plant that in its own country seemed so ordinary, so commonplace. That refinement of art, the culture of the Middle Ages, which we are asked to look upon as a spontaneous growth, was not even the maturing of an imperfect civilization long established, but was a mere continuation of that civilization, and not always of its highest possibilities either, a civilization that had flourished for at least eight centuries and had been in active progression for nearly twelve!



The new faith, Christianity, that had risen from the ruins of pagan antiquity, when once strong enough to stand alone, to rule in its turn, borrowed none of the forms from the customs of the peoples who had oppressed it, nor patterned in any way upon their art. All that pertained to them, or that even reminded the followers of Christ of them, was revolting—at least at first. Was it not for that reason largely that the Christian counsellors of Constantine advised the upbuilding of a new capital far from Rome and its unpleasant memories? He, a warrior, a Christian but in name, a leader of warriors, was fascinated with the charms, the insidious attractions of the Orient, and the capital of the world was transplanted to the Bosphorus. Still, neither he nor his followers were artists, though they saw, appreciated, admired and desired the beauties of all kinds the East set before them.

The time of miracles was almost past; few suppose the wondrous construction and perfect ornamentation of that capital was heaven-given. The inference is that those things were borrowed, assimilated; and whence?

Construction as typified by this so-called *new* art of Byzantium, indicated an advanced knowledge of statics of equilibrium, of complicated mechanism, and acknowledged neither Egypt nor Greece, nor Rome as prototypes. Perfect as were the parts, the construction of the details and the sculptured decorations used in the architecture of these three great teachers of the world, was primitive, infantile, so simple as to be unscientific, a mere superposing of masses, entablatures and roofs upon vertical supports placed close together, structures covering much ground, but rising little above it, a construction one is justified in terming technically "brutal." Egypt piled masses high in the air, it is true; but bulding a mound of stone even mountain-high, though impressive, is not the art of construction. The monuments of India were but excavations in the rock, with elaborately carven surfaces. There was nothing serious about the monuments of ancient China; dainty they were, interesting, but not to be dignified by the name art. No, the artists employed by Constantine, the architects of St. Sophia and of the other strikingly beautiful structures of Byzantium took none of these for their models, nor did they create a style upon some heavenly inspiration; they were influenced, as were their masters, by the examples of Persian art they saw all about them. In fact, most of them were men trained in the Orient, if not indeed Orientals themselves.

Some strange, preservative influence has been at work that permitted that country, in spite of its ups and downs and the mutations

and vicissitudes of time, the Elam of old, the birthplace of art, to retain its place among nations as the highest exponent of the true science of building, of the perfection of form and the correct balance between structure and ornament.

The absence of stone and timber in quantities necessitated the use of bricks and materials of small dimensions, hence their skill in handling such small parts and incorporating them into magnificent masses. When wide openings were required the arch was the only means of spanning them. Such construction forced them into the knowledge of statics and into scientific experimenting and calcula-



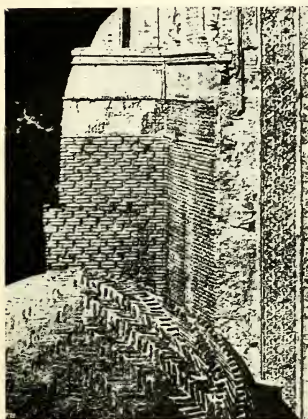
THE MOSQUE OF ST. SOPHIA, CONSTANTINOPLE.

tions. Their inborn love of beauty and color forced them to the use of enamels, dainty pottery, inlays and mosaics. At the time I write of, the art had been brought to a state almost of perfection.

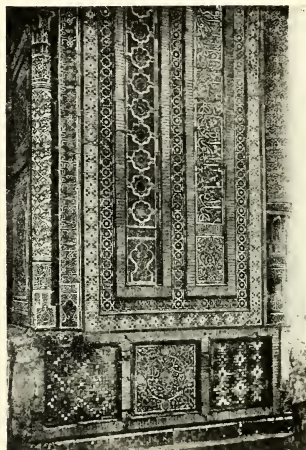
The Romans and other despoilers of the East, admiring these works, had robbed it of much of its portable treasures. The merchants of the West trafficking back and forth—the East was then the great storehouse of the world, the land of gold and of promise, and was in much the same relation to the West as America was regarded by Europe in the seventeenth century—had left stations, settlements all along the great highways from India to Rome, and to

the north, built after the manner of the East, and filled with its productions. All about Constantinople were such stations, such influences; all breathed of Persia and of Arabia, "Araby the blest," and of far-off India.

The founders of the new capital were thus already familiar with Oriental art, and now as they set about building their city, and became subject to the still closer influence of that art, being men not at all of an inventive race anyway, they were most susceptible to the fascination of their surroundings. Therefore it is not at all sur-



ARABIAN BRICK WORK.

TILE AND ENAMEL WORK OF THE  
SARACENS.

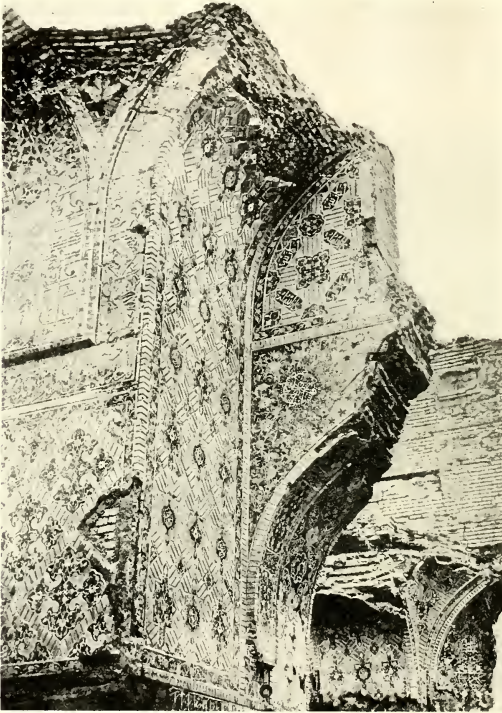
The more crude structurally ornamented brick work of the Arabians suggested and preceded the almost feminine refinement of the art in Mohammedan hands.

prising that they adopted the delicate, sensuous and graceful art of their new neighborhood rather than that of their fathers, let alone any prejudice they might have had against the latter for the religious reasons I have before mentioned, and notwithstanding that they had the quarries and the forests and the laborers of the world to draw upon for even cyclopean construction had they desired it, rather than the dainty arcades, traceries and mosaics they used.

Some wise men of the West have attempted to trace Grecian influence in the art of the new capital. Grecian influence, forsooth!



Greece was dead, despoiled, forgotten, no longer visited ; its civilization, carried to Rome long before, had become debased, deformed and finally replaced entirely by Asiatic influences that held most potent sway over the Romans, a people capable of appreciating beauty, but without initiative in art, invention or any creative powers in that line.



LATER ORIENTAL DECORATION.

The brick base upon which and embedded in which were "woven," so to speak, the face tiling and enamels of later Oriental work.

Where in Grecian or Roman art do you find a suggestion for the great dome of St. Sophia's? What in the classic orders could inspire the elongated, bizarre and banded columns, the fantastic and weird capitals of the Byzantine works? And their great gilded

backgrounds to their vividly colored pictorial representations, done in bits of glass and enameled tile; their mosaics, their fabrics, their jewels, their glassware, their furnishings; were they inspired by the severely correct, albeit beautiful, works of Greece? Can there be any connection between the natural poses and true painting of the human figure by the Greeks, and the conventionalized, stiff, almost grotesque figures of Byzantium?

After Alexander's great conquests and their resultant dislocation of the Persian empire, its customs and its arts still held sway, as we have noted, over not only the conquered but the conquerors.

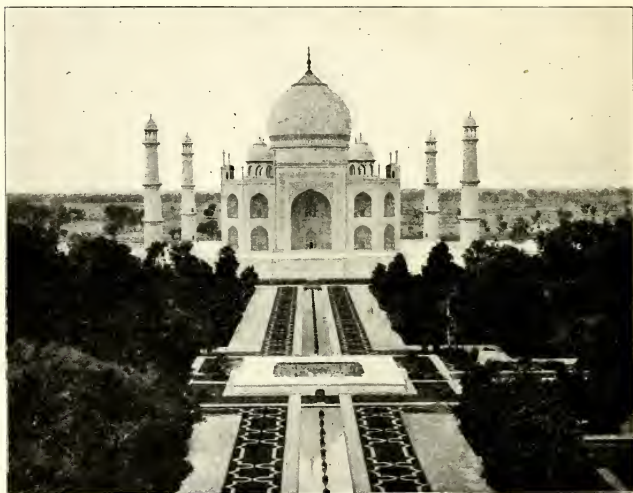


THE SEVEN TOWERS OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

Oriental influence in Byzantium, refining, luxurious, almost effeminate as it made them, did not prevent the Byzantines from building exceedingly strong and forbidding fortifications.

So after the destruction of Nineveh, of Babylon, of Persepolis, those regions preserved the memories of their former greatness. Any building that was erected was along those lines so well remembered. The spirit of those old achievements was dormant, but it took but a man, some mastering genius, or a great cause, to awaken to full life, and refreshed by that rest, all the splendor and grace of old. Such an art was easily resuscitated. The building of Constantinople furnished the occasion, the awakening; the result we have seen all over the world and still feel.

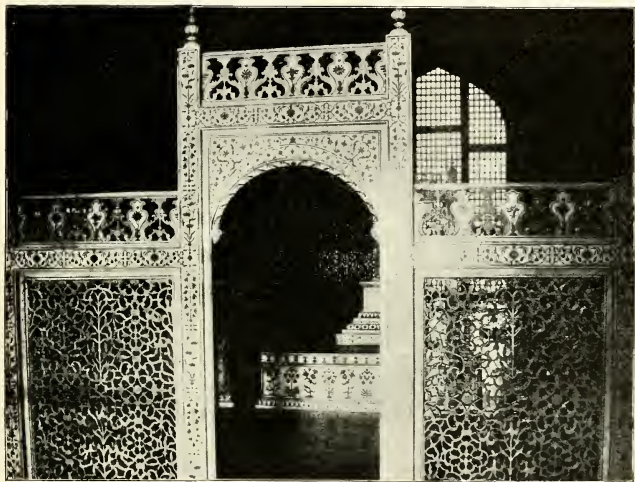
And Byzantium or Constantinople was but the way-station, so to speak, for that grand Oriental art on its way to a world-influence. Persia and its art were too far from, too completely separated from Europe, to affect it at one bound. Constantine was thus the intermediary of that powerful Asiatic influence. He employed Metrodorus to build his church, his palaces. Later Anthemese of Tralles, and Isidorus of Milet rebuilt the church as it has been preserved to us. All three were Orientals, two of them Persians. Even Justinian II employed a Persian architect in beautifying his capital. Other peoples of the Occident came to Constantinople, as visitors, as captives, as



TAJ MAHAL (GEM OF BUILDINGS) AGRA, INDIA.

merchants, and, admiring the grandeur and beauty of its marvelous works, carried the seed back with them, scattering it about in every direction. Byzantium was truly the pivotal point from which that Oriental influence radiated. There was much traveling and visiting those days; that influence spread and bore fruit with astonishing rapidity. You see, as we have before noted, the Orient, or perhaps more properly speaking, India, was the great treasure-house. There was a constant stream of travel toward and from it. Naturally all the lines of travel westward contracted and passed through the new capital, hence the wide range of that astonishing Byzantine influence.

Mentioning Indian trade calls to mind what a lodestone that commerce has ever been to the entire world; a bone of contention, too. Its possession has always been looked upon as absolutely essential to any nation desiring to be a world-power. Egypt and Assyria contended for it, and as each gained it did she become mistress of the world. The rivalry of Nineveh, Thebes and Babylon for that trade gave rise to the wars that immortalized the names of Rameses and of Sesostris. The Argonauts sought to gain that commerce; so did greater Greece. Alexander's objective point was India and its riches. Rome fought for it, too, and in gaining Egypt and both banks of the



INTERIOR DECORATION IN THE TAJ MAHAL.

Euphrates controlled the two great highways to that promised land. Then Islamism overthrew all that the emperors had accomplished. It was to avoid the caliph's exactions, and the monopoly of Venice, that the great navigators, Columbus among them, sought a sea route westward to India. Spain, Holland, France, England have contended for its possession. Napoleon in his Egyptian campaign was headed for India; England seems to have a pretty firm grip upon it to-day, but would rest more securely and blissfully did Russia not persist in ever reaching out in that direction.

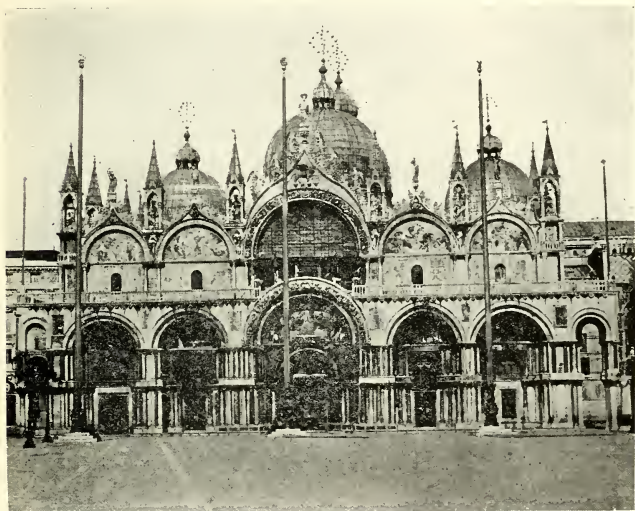
Is it necessary to repeat here the old arguments claiming a

Greco-Roman influence upon the buildings of Byzantium? Surely not; those old contentions have been disproved years ago. Persian art, as we have before noted, held sway all about; its arcades, aqueducts, vaulted and domed ceilings, its rich ornamentation, its fabrics, its embroidery, all absolutely unlike anything Occidental, particularly Grecian, had reached high perfection. There had been great luxury in their work ever since the founding of the post-biblical cities under the Arsacidian and Sassanidian dynasties. So that the founders of Byzantium found an art already made. Founded by Byzas, the Greek navigator, taken two hundred years afterward by Darius and held by the Persians until the end of the reign of Xerxes, it was really a Persian city, anyway. From the whole world there flocked to the new capital scientists, men skilled in the arts and crafts, as well as great merchants, financiers and the aristocracy of Rome and many other centers. From Alexandria came a colony of experts, we might call them, who, having already been deeply imbued with that Oriental art, and inflamed with the exalting mysticism and purity of the new faith, quickly adapted that art to the forms, the purposes, the soul, I might say, of Christian worship and life. The square plan of the olden pagan temple gave place to the cross-shapen plan of the church; religious zeal and fervor, supplemented with boundless wealth, made all things possible. That style, Byzantine indeed, but of Persian birth withal, grew amazingly. Most extraordinary effects were gotten and wondrous feats in construction performed. Under Emperor Basil did that style reach its apogee. Arcades were superimposed upon arcades, cupolas upon cupolas, arches became more and more stilted, some were pointed, in fact, vast domes were sprung from tiniest supports, color and ornament that in other hands would have been riotous, were blended into splendid harmony. The men of that day and place were profoundly versed in statics, in geometry, in algebra and equilibrium; they thoroughly understood the values of masses and openings, of lights and shadows, and their works were marvels of combined science and art, epoch-marks in the history of the arts, aye in the history of the world.

By the year 440, one hundred and twelve years after the founding of the capital of Byzantium, and just one hundred years after the building of St. Sophia's by Constance, the son of the great Constantine, the so-called Byzantine style had found a firm foothold in Italy. That year they began a great cathedral at Ravenna, patterned in the main after St. Sophia's, though the Italians found it difficult to divorce themselves entirely from classic forms. The acanthus leaf and the Ionic volutes still had charms in their eyes, and they indulged.



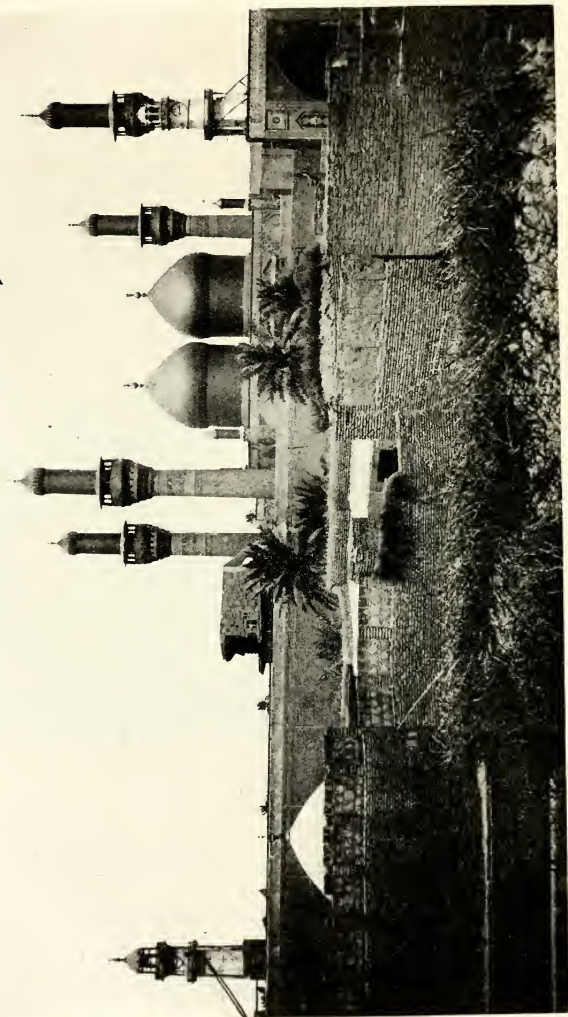
during that transitory time, in some strange medleys of those forms with wild animals, flowers, snakes and what not that were deemed essential parts of Oriental decoration. The fluted columns became thinner and took on lines in the other direction, bands, garlands, lozenges, twistings and turnings. The earlier attempts of the Italians to apply what they had seen in the city of Constantine to their own buildings were certainly crude. The style they evolved, otherwise known as Romanesque, might rather be called a travesty upon the Persian daintiness of Byzantine art. Still, the seed was there.



ST. MARK'S CATHEDRAL AT VENICE.

The church of St. Cyriac at Ancona (its capitals are absolute copies of Persepolitan works), that of St. Zeno at Verona, and that of St. Mark at Venice are striking examples of that transitory period, the infancy of Byzantine art in Europe.

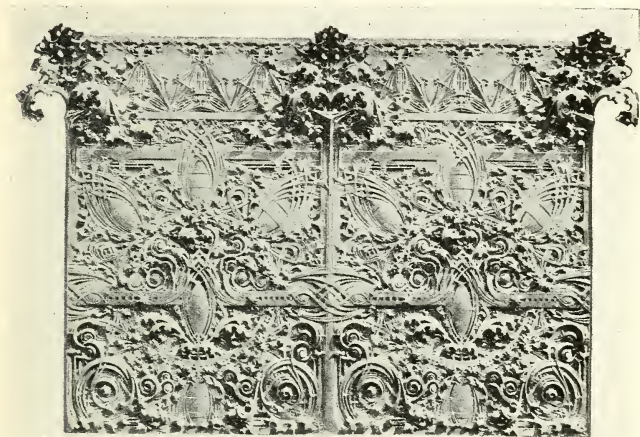
In many of the buildings of the period immediately following, notably the work at Padua and Venice, radical departures were made in the general lines; the style became more flamboyant and daring, but after a little while, they got back to a closer imitation of St. Sophia's in form, in detail and in construction. This church really seems to be the most perfect example of that art. The Turks clung



THE SHRINES OF HUSSEIN AND ABBAS AT KERBELA.

to it, when once they began copying it, more tenaciously than any other people. At Stamboul, for centuries after, every building erected was but a copy of some part of St. Sophia's. The later structures in Egypt, in Persia, in India and in Russia, are all traceable to that magnificent model.

You may follow the old Persian art of Babylon and of Persepolis, down through that of Ecbatana, of Hamadon and of Media—and find that this one example of Byzantine is the hyphen uniting that ancient art to that of Catholic Europe, first called *romanesque*,



A DISTINCTLY SULLIVANESQUE ORNAMENT.

Oriental in feeling, mystic and beautiful.

then gothic, as well as that of the Mohammedans that finally pervaded the entire world.

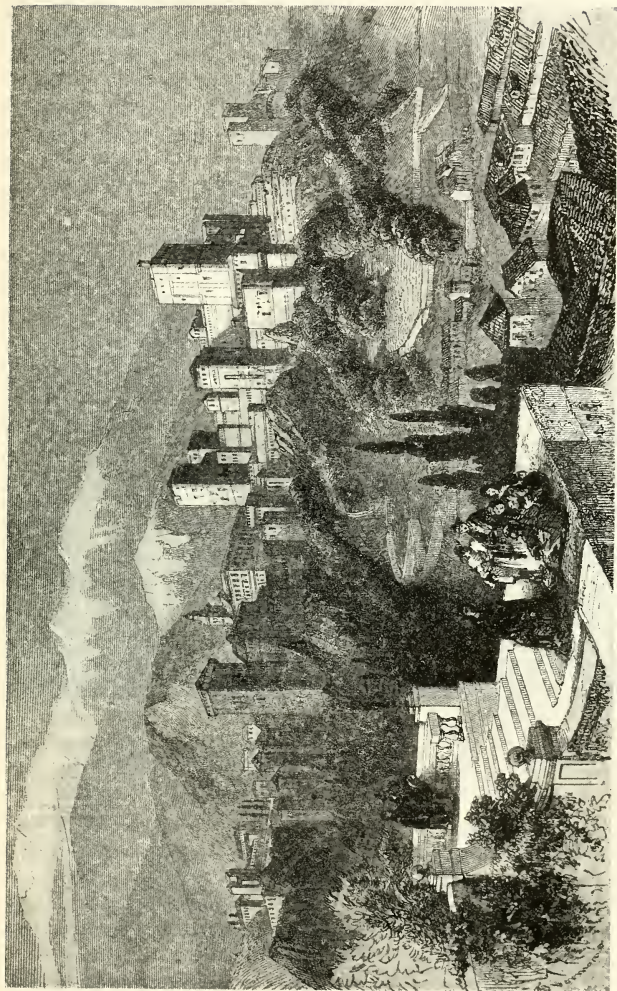
It seems strange to have to thank the fanatic Mohammedan as the most important medium of transmission that art of the Orient ever had. With him, as with the Goth, the Ostrogoth, the German, the Gaul, the Illyrian, and the other wild men who made incursions into civilization with the sole idea of rapine and conquest, he was quickly tamed by the refinement and beauty of his unwonted surroundings. In 637 Mohammedan invasions became the fashion. These hordes of wild Arabs—Arabia had lapsed into a state of almost primal savagery; its monuments buried, its people degenerated

into herders of cattle and roving bands of robbers—fanatical followers of the prophet, at first destroyed all that fell under their hands. Art and its treasures had no significance for them. Soon, however, it began to exert an influence upon them. No man can live with and see art all about him without soon becoming its abject slave. Then, too, these wild men were of good stock; their forefathers had lived in palaces and worshiped in magnificent temples. Constantinople became their headquarters; St. Sophia their chief mosque. Luxury and refinement grew less and less sinful in their eyes; the Oriental within them made itself felt. Persia fell under their sway. With Persian artists in their midst, Constantinople their headquarters, India their storehouse, and fresh art treasures and libraries and masters of crafts falling into their hands every day, they could not long stand the pressure. From brutal barbarity they became protectors, aye, masters of all the arts and sciences. Persian art then became Arabian art—by right of conquest. The followers of Mohammed still carried the sword and ruled by it, but then the highest civilization went along with them. The world never saw greater masters in every line of thought and action than attended the caliphs' bidding in erecting stupendous and beautiful palaces and mosques, in rearing great fortifications, in making splendid roads, in training the young, in making waste places bountifully fruitful, in fine, in civilizing the uncivilized world and vastly improving that part already civilized. Remember that their rule extended over a vast stretch of territory, bounded on the west by the Guadalquivir, on the east by the Ganges! Then you will appreciate the extent of the influence of Mohammedan art—but another name for Persian art, modified, translated, though not enriched by Mohammedan touch.

A building of that period that has had a most extraordinary influence upon European and even American art is the Alhambra in the city of Granada, the home of the ancient Moorish kings of Granada, the "Red Castle," in the Arabic tongue, the *Casa Real* of the Spaniards of our day. Some portions of that grand construction have fallen into decay and other parts have been destroyed by looters, but the Court of the Fish Pond and the Court of the Lions, with their beautiful colonnades and arcades, magnificent specimens of the ceramic arts and of the wondrous work done in intaglio and in inlays and in mosaics by the patient Arab toilers in the marbles brought from Italy and Africa, still stand unmarred by the ravages of time or the vandal hand of man.

And Persia still remained the fountain-head, the base of supply, the genesis of that exquisite art. Did one want to build a palace



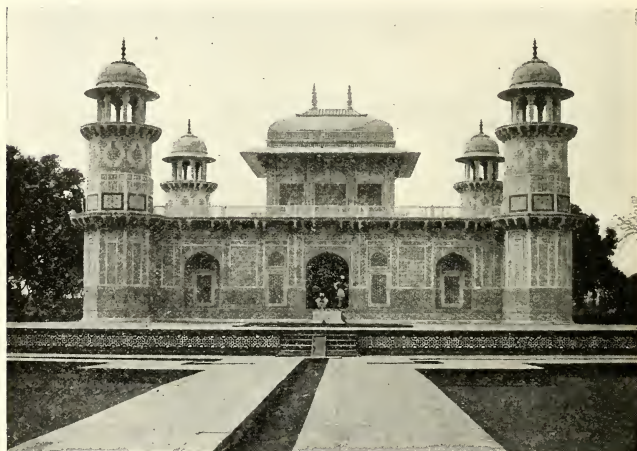


THE ALHAMBRA AT GRANADA.



or mosque of particular splendor, it was a Persian artist who was entrusted with the commission; when Abderam decided to build the Alcazar at Cordova it was to Persia he sent for an architect, and who will claim that even classic Greece gave birth to greater artists, men of more exalted ideals, more poetic inspiration and more skilful in gracefully clothing those ideas in imperishable materials, than were the artists of the Middle Ages who first saw light in Kashan, in Hamadan, or in Geheran?

To the westward that art drifted into what we call "Arabian," and later "Moorish"; to the east, India, perhaps, of all Oriental



INLAID TOMB OF I'TIMADUDAULAH, AGRA, INDIA.

Copyright 1907 by H. G. Ponting. By courtesy of the Bausch & Lomb Optical Company.

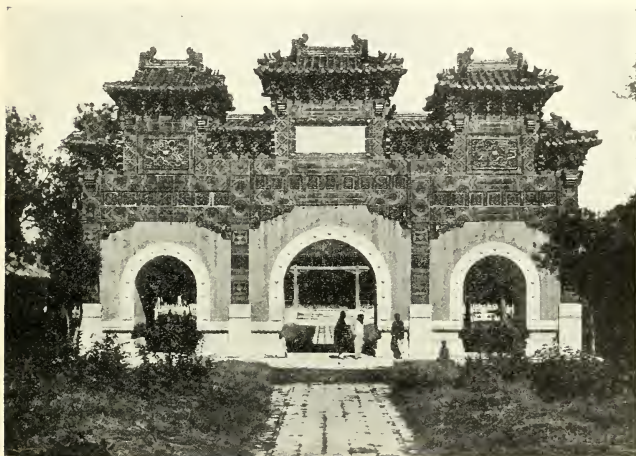
countries, carried it to the highest perfection. That country's climate, the wealth of its princes, all conditions were favorable to its development. The baths, the tombs, the palaces of Delhi, of Lahore, of Agra, are still, despoiled as so many of them are by native greed or foreign vandalism, the wonder and admiration of all western travelers.

After long suffering the peoples of southern Europe threw off the hated yoke of the "true believer." Still all southern Europe was inoculated with the learning, the art of the Mohammedan.

Add this influence to that already noted, the Byzantine, and you will have some idea of the leaning there was toward Orientalism.

Then Christendom, encouraged by its deliverance from the scourge of Islamism, carried its advantage still further, even into the land of the enemy. It became the invader, determined to wrest the Holy Sepulcher from the Saracen—together with whatever portable belongings the latter might not be able to hold onto.

The Crusaders brought back not only plunder, but the habits, the luxuriousness of their old foes. They were captivated by all



PAILOW OF THE GARDEN OF THE HALL OF CLASSICS, PEKING, CHINA.

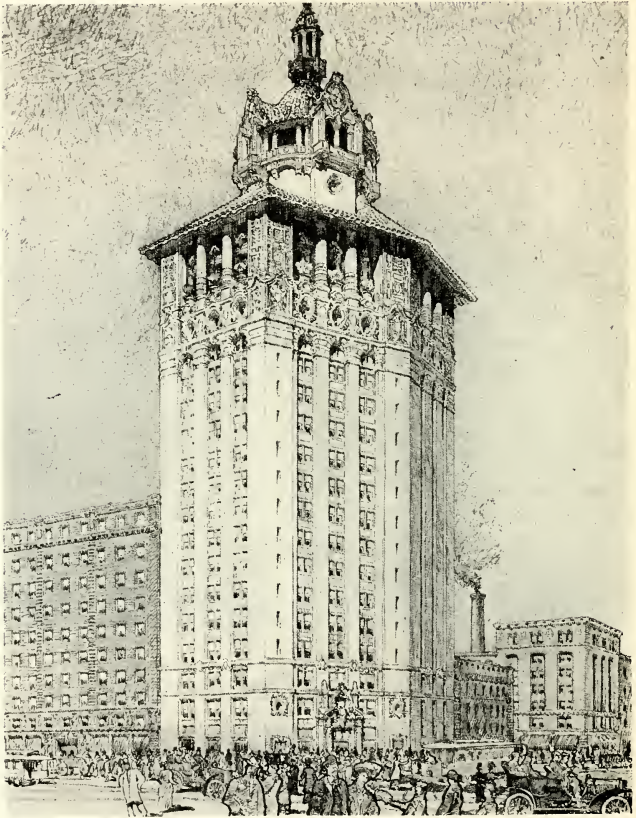
"Oriental" in strictest sense of the term, coincident with though hardly influenced by the art of India and of Babylon.

Copyright 1907 by H. G. Ponting. By courtesy of the Bausch & Lomb Optical Company.

they had seen in the Orient, they employed artists from the East to build their castles, their great public buildings, aye, even their sacred edifices. And thus was added another mesh to the already stout lashings that held the artistic world bounden to the Orient.

The men of the fifteenth century believed they had forever outgrown that influence, when they again began to copy in season and out of it, and with little skill, the stately models of classic Greece, or the florid creations of imperial Rome; an influence so potent,

however, that even we of far-off America, and in this late generation, still feel its thralldom.



A SAN FRANCISCO BUILDING.

With a distinctly Oriental flavor; a refreshing change from the hackneyed styles.

Of the men of our own time who has left a deeper impress upon our architecture than Richardson, and who, if not he, has had such a horde of feeble imitators follow in his wake? And yet the school,

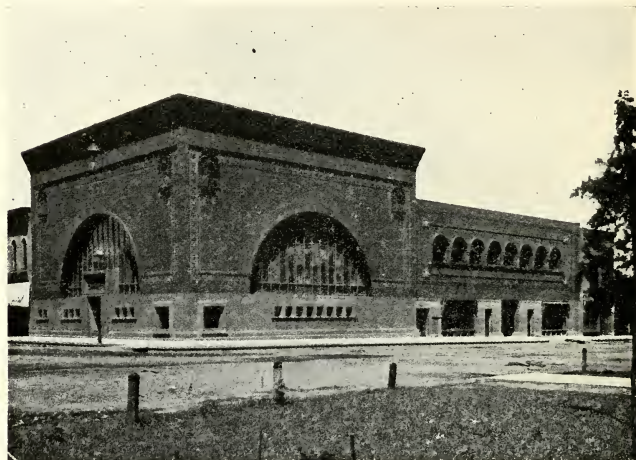


RICHARDSON'S MASTERPIECE, THE PITTSBURG COURTHOUSE.  
This drawing shows the proposed addition of a huge tower for additional court space needed, admirably designed in harmony with the main structure by Palmer and Hornbostel.



the style he worked in, was not our well-beloved classic, or neo-grec, or French Renaissance, but a very coarse, I may say almost clumsy, order of that Oriental art. His particular fancy was an early Byzantine, with a strong tendency toward the vigorous, virile, Norman influence, and rendered usually in stone, and that of large dimensions and rustic surfaces. Not by any means the insidiously delicate, subtle dreaminess, the idealization of the later Byzantine, and but a faint suggestion of the true Oriental.

An influence, too, I will add as my "lastly," that we do wrong to combat, as we seem to be doing of late. I am not an advocate of



A MINNESOTA BANK.

Merely decorated construction. One of Sullivan's happiest designs.

any one style of architecture being used for church and stable, palace and cottage. Of the two evils I would rather follow the school that so earnestly, even if misguidedly, advocates "a medieval style for colleges, because their teaching is of the dark ages(?); a gothic for Anglican churches, because that church had its beginning in early gothic times; a German renaissance for Lutheran churches; a classic for public buildings, because the perfection of civic government was reached in Greece, etc." But I do believe that in our commercial buildings, where light and lightness both are much to be desired,





A BUSINESS BLOCK OF BUFFALO, N. Y.

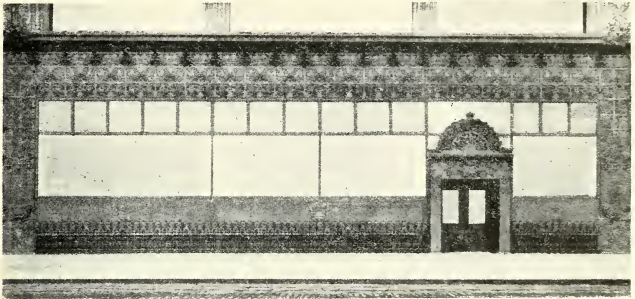
No attempt at classic or other forced style, a highly decorated exterior, but simple and straightforward, eminently suited to our modern commercial wants.



"A CORINTHIAN TEMPLE PERCHED UPON A BASEMENT OF TWENTY STORIES."

their steel members could be covered with dainty brick and tile and terra-cotta, in the pretty blended colors and glazes, and graceful lines we could borrow from the Orient—since we can not invent, but must copy something, or, at least, be “inspired” by something already done—to much better advantage and with far more truth than we do in our classic fad of to-day.

Are you not a trifle tired of seeing a Corinthian temple two stories high, perched upon a “basement” some twenty-odd stories higher, doing duty as an acropolis? And what truth or real art is there in a façade of cyclopean columns and a mighty cornice, every stone of which is tied to and teetered upon a steel girder, or suspended from above as you would hang a bird-cage? And all these feats of equilibrium performed merely to try and make the thing look



ONE OF SULLIVAN'S "PICTURE-FRAME FRONTS."

Sensible, attractive and frank.

like a massive masonry structure, that every one knows perfectly well it is not!

Many of us, most of us, laugh at Sullivan, of Chicago, and his "East Indian picture-frame fronts" of buildings, but is he not, of us all, nearer the solution of the problem presented us by the new conditions, the tall frames we have to clothe, and are too timid to cut into the cloth without the old reliable Butterick patterns of our fathers' solid masonry and classic details being first well-pinned down over that cloth? He, at least, frankly shows us that he is merely using a veneer of brick or other thin plastic material, to conceal and protect the steel skeleton that we all know is there, and then proceeds to decorate and ornament that veneer as effectually and pleasantly, but truthfully, as he can. And he does it, too; but

he did not succeed in doing it until he dipped into the deep well of Oriental art for his inspiration.

A well as broad as it is deep and still filled to o'erflowing, though it has been drawn from, as we have briefly reviewed, by all nations at all times. A well, too, as attractive as it is inexhaustible, but that for some not well-defined reason we have avoided of late. Perhaps we fear its seductions; they have been called enervating, but wrongly, I do protest. Some architects, the over-righteous ones of the craft, may turn from me, when I so earnestly plead for renaissance of Oriental art, fearing there may again be occasion to lament its "baneful" influence, as Jeremiah of old did lament the influence of Babylon, saying: "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken; the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad."